

VZCZCXRO2064
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #1285 1721445
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 211445Z JUN 07
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8132
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS JERUSALEM 001285

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: HAMAS TRYING TO HOLD ON TO LEGITIMACY, SEEKING
SECURITY IN GAZA

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: HAMAS leaders in the Gaza Strip - including Former Prime Minister Haniyah and several HAMAS PLC members - have publicly questioned President Abbas's authority to dismiss the government and claim to represent the legitimate Palestinian Authority government. Abbas's office says HAMAS leaders in Gaza are focused on security and resuming government work at ministries.

HAMAS CHALLENGES LEGITIMACY OF THE NEW PA GOVERNMENT

¶2. (U) Mushir al-Masri, a HAMAS PLC member, in press June 20 criticized President Mahmud Abbas's (Abu Mazen) dismissal of the national unity government (NUG) and establishment of a new government. Acting Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) speaker Ahmad Bahar said Abbas acted illegally in declaring a state of emergency and the NUG remains the legal government until the PLC ratifies the new cabinet. HAMAS PLC member Khalil al-Hayya rejected Abbas's decree outlawing the group's Executive Force (EF).

¶3. (U) Former Prime Minister Ismail Haniyah in an interview ruled out a Gaza-based Palestinian state, saying Gaza belongs to all the Palestinian people, not just HAMAS." Speaking to the press, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Mahmud al-Zahar blamed Abbas for the competition between governing administrations in the Palestinian territories. Al-Hayya in a June 19 press conference urged Fatah leaders to join HAMAS in a serious dialogue to "protect Palestinian institutions and property." Al-Hayya contrasted Fatah's willingness to engage with Israel with Fatah's refusal to deal with HAMAS and warned Fatah against attempting to separate Gaza from the West Bank.

HAMAS FOCUSED ON SECURITY IN GAZA, HOPING TO SECURE SUPPORT

¶4. (SBU) Haniyah began consolidating HAMAS's control in Gaza by "dismissing" senior security officials, including MOI Director General Rashid Abu Shabak and Chief of Civil Police Kamal al-Shaykh, according to information from President's office. (NOTE: Abu Shabak and al-Shaykh are both in Ramallah, so Haniyah's "dismissal" of them has no practical effect.) Haniyah appointed a new Security Council to oversee the security services. Tawfiq Jabr is the head of this council, which includes Khadder Abbas (a retired PLA member) and Hassan al-Ajrami.

¶5. (U) On June 19, Haniyah convened members of his former cabinet in Gaza in what HAMAS called a government session primarily to discuss the security situation, according to a HAMAS-issued press statement. The Security Council instructed all security personnel in the Gaza Strip to report to work (in contrast to orders from the Fatah leadership that all security personnel stay home). As of June 20, the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Rafah (currently located in

Ashkelon) reported that in Rafah hundreds of EF and civil police are patrolling the streets. They are guarding universities and food warehouses, and conducting traffic. Haniyah banned security personnel from wearing masks, which EUBAM said is a requirement that is being enforced. EF Spokesman Islam Shahwan told the press that the EF and civil police already conducted a joint operation against a Gaza City drug dealer and that the EF is dealing with other criminal activity consistent with HAMAS's commitment to end lawlessness. Zahar in an interview praised HAMAS's ability to prevent chaos in Gaza and belittled Fatah's efforts to maintain security in the West Bank.

16. (U) HAMAS appeared to have control of media outlets in Gaza, a USAID partner staff member reported to the Consulate. Newspapers printed in Ramallah and Jerusalem are not crossing into Gaza and only the HAMAS newspaper Felesteen is available on the streets. Two Fatah radio stations and a PFLP station have been closed. Only two radio stations are operating in the Gaza Strip: HAMAS's "al-Aqsa" and Palestine Islamic Jihad's (PIJ) "al-Quds". The HAMAS-affiliated "al-Aqsa" TV is broadcasting, although satellite TV is available from Ramallah.

WALLES